



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, IRENE!

by Eleanor Griest
Irene Corbally Kuhn, a founder of the Overseas Press Club, returned to her Greenwich Village apartment recently following a visit with her daughter's family near Boston. She had gone U.S. Air shuttle, by herself, 10 days before her 95th birthday, which Irene would tell you is no big deal.

Another OPC member, Li Ling-Ai, a longtime friend of Irene's, and I went to dinner with her on her birthday, Jan. 15.

Recalling her experiences as a correspondent with a variety of newspapers and wire services on six continents—including the mysterious death of her young newspaperman husband, Bert L. Kuhn, in 1926 when their daughter, Rene, was 3—Irene says she has no regrets about her choice of occupation. She declares that she

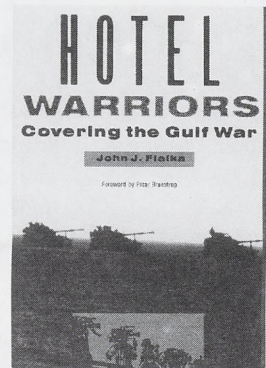
still feels the same way she did when she wrote in her bestselling autobiography, "Assigned to Adventure" (Lippincott, 1938): "Turn the calendar back, give me another chance and I'd do it all over again. I wouldn't give up one heartache or trade any part of the agony or high adventure for a chance to live my life again in security and peace. To live close to reality is really to live."

"I lead a very normal life," she said a few days ago. "I'm in excellent health, and I don't need any help. I eat everything, and still take a glass of wine here and there. God has been very good to me. I come from good Irish stock, you know."

THE WAR IN THE GULF

Hotel Warriors: Covering the Gulf War. John J. Fialka. Forward by Peter Braestrup. The Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

For all of us who were frustrated by the bland coverage of the Gulf war, John J. Fialka has provided at least a partial answer. In describing the difficult relationship between the press and the military during the war, he



also gives us a real life feel for what covering the war was like.

Fialka offers several reasons why the American public was so poorly served by the war coverage—despite the hundreds of journalists present. For one, some army officers were convinced that the press had "lost" the Vietnam war and were determined not to have that happen again.

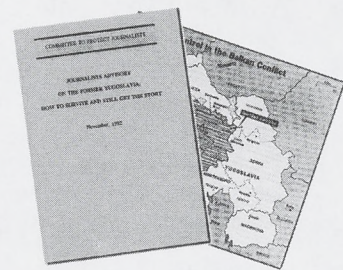
Sometimes there was outright censorship. An AP photographer, Scott Applewhite, for example, was beaten and handcuffed by military police when he tried to photograph the barracks where 27 GIs were killed by an Iraqi and Scud missile.—Stanley Reed

SURVIVAL MANUAL

While 45 reporters died covering Vietnam over 15 years, at least 27 have already been

killed in Yugoslavia. Reporters have fallen prey to the confusing nature of the conflict, where there are many sides and the troops are often undisciplined, drunken paramilitaries.

To help reduce the casualties, the Committee to Protect Journalists is distributing a handbook called *How To Survive and*



Still Get the Story. Among its tips: Wear body armor. Never rush up to people carrying guns, or wear anything that looks military-issue. Always ask before taking pictures of notes. Carry basic first-aid gear, including clean syringes and even sanitary napkins.

Anne Nelson, executive director of the committee, reports that after *Time* magazine carried a story about the handbook last month, she received more than 100 requests for the guide within a week from the U.S. and Europe.

—Janice Castro

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Three Hot Events Set in February & April

On Feb. 16 the writer P.J. O'Rourke will tell us about the month he spent in Somalia with U.S. military forces. His subject, "Somalia: The Good, the Bad, and the Funny," will touch on some of the serious issues involved in covering that relief operation and, inevitably, he will also poke fun at the military and the media, notes Bill Holstein of *Business Week*, head of the program committee.

"He's that kind of guy," Holstein says.

O'Rourke, a member of the OPC and a frequent contributor to *Rolling Stone*, also is the author of *Parliament of Whores and Give War A Chance*. Show up. Come and hear P.J. He's funny. Buy his books.

The program will be held at The Tudor at 5:30 p.m. at 304 East 42nd.

A second program, to be held a week and a half later, on Feb. 25, will focus on "Exporting American Journalism to Russia." It will feature Christopher Wren, editor of new projects for *The New York Times*, and Robert J. Dowling, assistant managing editor of *Business Week*. The third panelist will be Max McCrohon, editor in chief of "We," a joint venture between Hearst and Izvestia. The moderator will be Ann Blinkhorn, publisher of *The Times* Russian edition.

Wren, a veteran of 17 years in Eastern Europe, supervises *The News In*

Review, a Russian language issue edition of *The Times*, while Dowling is in charge all the international operations of *Business Week*, including the magazine's Russian edition, which reaches 50,000 readers.



Christopher Wren

HOW TO BE A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

A daylong workshop for students on how to become a foreign correspondent will be presented Tuesday, April 12, by the OPC Foundation and the Center for Communications. The event will be held from 10 to 4 in the auditorium of the lower level of the General Electric building at 570 Lexington Ave.

Speakers will include Peter Arnett of CNN and Tom Kent of the Associated Press. The sessions will be held at the Center for Communications, which is situated at 570 Lexington. H.L. Stevenson, head of the OPC Foundation,

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P.J. O'Rourke



Robert Dowling

OPC Bulletin

Dick Thornburgh addresses a group of 70 at the OPC luncheon. "These are peace-keeping operations where there is no peace," he said of the U.N.'s efforts in Somalia and Yugoslavia.



The two scholarship winners, Monica Gyulai (l), and Kelly Moore (r), with H.L. Stevenson, former OPC president.



2 Receive \$1,000 OPC Scholarships

BY AMY SIVCO

Dick Thornburgh, the United Nations Under-Secretary General for management, spoke about the growing challenges the United Nations faces—both in-house and worldwide—at the inaugural luncheon of the new home of the Overseas Press Club at The Tudor on January 28. The luncheon honored the two winners of the \$1,000 OPC scholarships for young journalists.

The scholarships went to Kelly C. Moore, 25, of the Russian and East European Institute and the School of Journalism at the University of Indiana in Bloomington, and Monica Gyulai, 26, a student at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism.

The OPC received 70 entries from more than 20 universities and colleges across the United States. Applicants were judged on the basis of a 500-word essay about an issue or area of the world that they feel deserves better coverage.

In her essay, Moore addressed the importance of covering ethnic conflicts.

"Since World War I, huge multinational empires have been crumbling into their constituent ethnic parts," she wrote. "If current trends continue, issues of ethnicity will continue to occupy the world's attention."

Gyulai, who plans to work for a daily newspaper when she graduates,

argued against biased reporting, especially in the coverage of Africa. "Most people still get impressions from Tarzan movies and *National Geographic*," she wrote in her essay.

Preceding the award ceremony, Thornburgh discussed the U.N.'s role

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Vietnam: The More It Changes...

By William Branigin
The Washington Post, Manila

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—With this bustling former South Vietnamese capital looking more like pre-1975 Saigon every day, it was perhaps inevitable that someone would open a place like the Apocalypse Now Cafe.

Posters of a glowering Marlon Brando from the movie of the same name hang on black-painted walls, and 1960s rock music blares from fuzzy

speakers. And the seedy bar seems to be doing a booming trade these days. It has been cashing in on an influx of foreigners who have a certain taste for nostalgia with their Saigon 333 or Tiger beer.

One recent night, the crowd included tourists, businessmen, U.N. personnel from neighboring Cambodia and a few journalists. A scattering of hookers floated in and out, including a few who looked as if they were old enough to

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Scholarships...

Continued from P. 1

in a changing world, stressing its peace-keeping efforts worldwide, and in its own agenda of reform within the organization.

"The world has changed...and the U.N. has had to change accordingly," he noted.

In his speech, Thornburgh stressed the importance of the U.N.'s peace-keeping role, and how the "character" of the operations had changed substantially.

"The U.N. has become a kind of worldwide 911 emergency number," he said. "Every time there's a hotspot, the call goes out to the U.N. to do something."

Money, however, is a continuing problem. The arrears for member states exceed \$1 billion. "The term financial crisis has become a permanent description of its financial status," he said.

Thornburgh, who is leaving his post on March 1, suggested that the U.N. continue to reduce overstaffing, skip costly worldwide conferences until 1995 and establish an inspector general's office.

Thornburgh is a two-term former Republican governor of Pennsylvania. He was Attorney General from 1988 to 1991 under the Reagan and Bush administrations.

The scholarship committee consists of Dwight Sargent, Werner Linz, Maria Ferris, Josephine Lyons, R. Edward Jackson and H.L. Stevenson, the president of the OPC Foundation, which sponsored the awards.

Said Stevenson: "All the judges were impressed with the essays and the sincerity and the scope of their suggestions. One member of our panel said it would be easy to award six or eight scholarships."



Thousands of bicycles line the streets of Ho Chi Minh City, or Saigon, during a busy period. It's not exactly rush hour in New York, but some of the old vices have returned, and street crime is said to be making a comeback. —AP Photo

Vietnam...

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have plied their trade during the war.

In many ways, the city bears little resemblance to the dreary, oppressed place it had become a decade ago when Hanoi's communists had imposed a regime of poverty in their efforts to stamp out the south's capitalist roots.

Then the place had the grim feeling of an occupied capital. Now, private sector activity is surging ahead under a five-year-old economic renovation program. New hotels, restaurants and businesses have sprouted up all over, dilapidated buildings have been renovated or torn down, and traffic again clogs the streets. Complaints are less about communism and oppression these days than about bureaucracy, corruption and pollution.

On a side street across from the run-down former U.S. Embassy, which now houses offices of the state oil company, part of a complex that was once a

Hanoi government cultural center has been turned into a posh-looking new nightclub. A sign in English advertises the "West Villa Club," featuring "Karaoke, Dancing, Food and

Beverage." Opposite the former French Embassy is an ice cream parlor with a sign touting "Italian gelato." The city, which most people here continue to call Saigon, still has its timeless charms. Schoolgirls wearing traditional white *ao dai* costumes glide along on their bicycles, and sidewalk cafes still offer rich strong coffee from the Central Highlands. But some of the old vices have returned as well and street crime is making a comeback.

Items from the past such as dogtags and cigarette lighters are for sale at sidewalk stalls. The lighters tell a story of growing disillusion with the war. The earlier ones tend to be inspirational but by the end of the 1960s and early 70s, many of the slogans have become unprintable. My favorite, from 1968, reads: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for I am the evilest son of a bitch in the valley."

William Branigin, who was based in Bangkok from 1981 to 1986, has made several visits to Vietnam. He spent four years in Mexico City, followed by his current assignment as East Asia correspondent for The Washington Post.

Mexico Struggles for a Freer Press

By Scott Larson

Even as the North American Free Trade Agreement and political reforms push Mexico toward a more open society, the nation continues to struggle with the basic notion of a free press.

From newspaper self-censorship to the veiled threat of violence, the press in this outwardly democratic nation is heavily controlled.

"You have to try to go about your job the same way you would in the U.S., but it usually isn't possible," says Jim Silver, a U.S.-trained journalist who covers politics for *The News*, an English-language daily in Mexico City. "That's because the government and often people in the private sector have no notion that the public has a right to information."

In a nation where the same political party—the Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI—has ruled for 63 years, information is power. "There is the feeling that information is handed out only as necessary, and often as a gift or

The reporter who takes bribes feels compelled to give the source's version of events.

reward," says Silver. "The job of many public information officers is to obstruct the flow of information, not aid it."

The most subtly effective method of media control, observers say, is a sophisticated system of gift-giving that falls short of outright bribery but produces the same result.

According to a 1991 report by the Canadian Committee to Protect

Journalists, 90 percent of reporters in Mexico earn between \$100-\$600 a month—salaries that don't come close to meeting a basic standard of living. Many have turned to accepting hand-outs, or *chayotes*, from government sources to augment their incomes.

Starr Spencer, a colleague of Silver's who covers President Carlos Salinas de Gortari for *The News*, once watched a government press officer in the state of Veracruz stick an envelope filled with money in her bag. On another occasion, she was handed a government press kit that contained three 100,000-peso bills (about \$100). Another *News* reporter turned down \$1,500 during a government-sponsored trip to the U.S.-Mexico border.

Inherent in accepting the gifts, of course, is the understanding that the journalist will repay the government's generosity with favorable coverage.

Spencer calls it "psychological censorship" and says she has been told that 90 to 95 percent of the reporters on the presidential beat accept *chayote*.

Not all the means of control are as subtle. During the first four years of Salinas' six-year administration, 26 journalists have been slain. The most recent killing occurred on Nov. 20 when Ignacio Mendoza Castillo, a newspaper publisher from the state of Quintana Roo was fatally shot hours after attesting to press repression. Mendoza had also been critical of alleged corruption in the administration of Quintana Roo Gov. Miguel Borge Martin, who is a member of the PRI.

A subsequent government investigation found no link between the killing and Mendoza's activities as a journalist, but an Inter-American Press Association committee did uncover evidence

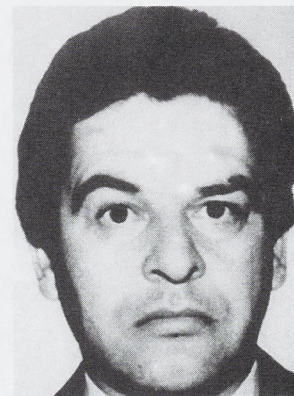
that state officials actively harassed Mendoza, including the ransacking of his office and beating of his secretary. There is also self-censorship at many of the country's newspapers. Most of these depend on government advertising for survival and are hesitant to be too critical or aggressive for fear that advertising will be pulled. Others are owned or run by people interested in promoting their own fortunes—and version of the truth. For example, *News* reporters had been told they could only write stories that cast Mexico in a positive light and could not mention any of the PRI's political opposition.

Still, recently, the Mexican government has taken some steps to, at least outwardly, correct the situation. Last fall, newspapers were told they would have to pay for reporters' expenses on foreign trips rather than expect the government to pick up the tab. And it has been rumored that Salinas ordered an end to *chayote* involving the presidential press pool.

But Silver and others in the press believe those measures don't go far enough, and that lasting change must come from journalists themselves.

"The Mexican press has to get more aggressive to force the government to change its ideas about information," Silver contends. "Historically, the government has had no need to take the press seriously."

Scott Larson has reported from Saudi Arabia, the Florida Keys, Alaska and Mexico.



Reporters were barred from investigating the 1985 slaying of the U.S. DEA agent Enrique Camarena.

Reporter's Body Identified

Human remains dug up in Cambodia last year have been identified as those of Welles Hangen, an American NBC correspondent who disappeared 23 years ago while covering the war in Southeast Asia.

Hangen's remains were positively identified by the U.S. Army Central Identification lab in Honolulu, said Arthur Lord, a senior NBC News producer in Burbank, Calif. He was buried Jan. 29 in Arlington National Cemetery.

Hangen was one of five television journalists believed executed by the Khmer Rouge following their disappearance in the Cambodian jungle on May 31, 1970. He was 40.

Hangen's body was one of four dug up from a riverbed during a U.S.-Cambodian excavation last March. The other 3 were an NBC News soundman, Yoshihiko Waku, a cameraman, Roger Colne, and a CBS News soundman,

Kojiro Saki. Waku and Saki were from Japan and Colne from France.

The Khmer Rouge marched the five into the jungle 25 miles south of Phnom Penh. When excavated from a riverbed in a rice field, two were found with their hands tied behind their backs, a U.S. official said last year.

Hangen's remains were cremated and buried at Arlington, Va., National Cemetery at the end of January.

His wife, Pat, said she had clung to a slim hope that her husband would be found alive.

"One would rather continue to hope, but it is important to have finality," she said from Alameda, Calif.

She wrote and published a book about her life with Hangen, a former *New York Times* correspondent.

Some of Hangen's audio and videotapes were installed at the Museum of Broadcasting in Manhattan during the 1970s.

Nibley, Williams To Edit Dateline

Andrew Nibley, the editor of Reuters Americas, and Brian Williams, the Media News Editor of Reuters, are producing this year's issue of *Dateline*, under the theme *A World In Turmoil*. Nibley covered a number of beats in Washington and London before taking charge of all Reuters editorial operations in the



Andrew Nibley

Western hemisphere. Williams, an Australian, was Reuters Chief Correspondent for India and the subcontinent before assuming his present post. To place an ad, call Nibley, the publisher, at (212) 603-3430. If you have a good story, call Brian, at 603-3420.



Brian Williams

Obituaries

Lee Kavetski, 61, sports editor of *Pacific Stars & Stripes* for the past 37 years, died of a heart attack in the newspaper's Tokyo office on Nov. 18. At his side when he was declared dead was **Hal Drake**, a senior *Stars & Stripes* writer who joined the U.S. military newspaper just a year after Kavetski.

"I can't remember ever meeting a person who disliked Lee Kavetski," **Corky Alexander**, the editor, wrote in his newspaper, *Tokyo Weekender*. "He had an easy way, an encyclopedic catalog of sports facts and figures in his head... Kavetski [born in Wilkes Barre, Pa.] was the consummate professional in the newsroom."

Lawrence Bernard, 65, a former senior editor with *Advertising Age*, died Dec. 20 after suffering a heart attack at his home in Great Neck, N.Y. He joined *Ad Age* in 1950 and reported a number of major package-goods companies. In 1973, he became co-founder and president of Leisure & Recreation Group. He later joined *Ad Age* as an editor and, after leaving in 1980, became a consultant.

A Day to Be Earnest

January 1 was proclaimed Earnest T. Hoberecht Day in honor of a longtime OPC member on his 75th birthday. A foreign correspondent in Asia during and after World War II, Hoberecht was UPI's vice president and general manger for Asia from 1953 to 1966, when he returned to his hometown, Watonga, Okla., to take over the abstract business founded by his father.